

# A Simple Retreat

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Many things may be envisioned when you say TREASURE Forest, but for the Haygood family of Macon County, a simple retreat comes to mind. When they purchased the 175-acre tract in 1977, the place was an old cattle farm about to be developed into a subdivision. There were open fields, plenty of planted pines, and an abundance of bottomland hardwoods. The Haygoods didn't know exactly what to do with the land when they became the new owners, but within the next two years they took what God had blessed them with putting all their time and effort into the property to make it their special place.

During the first years, Tony Haygood and his family tried to farm the land by selling peas and watermelons to individuals and stores. He had begun to realize that truck farming wasn't working when he was invited to a Forestry Planning Committee meeting. As Tony recalls, this is where it all began. He started asking questions about the different aspects of forestry; the next thing he knew he had a lot of agency people on his place wanting to help him get started.

## A New Beginning

With the help of the Alabama Forestry Commission, the Haygoods began the process of transforming the farm into a prized possession. They began to plant the open fields with pines, but soon southern pine beetle got into the established planted pine. The infestation was out of control and it would have been too expensive to take out the infested trees only, so the

Haygoods decided to clear-cut the whole area and start over. Starting over was a concept of which they were all too familiar.

Becoming impatient with waiting to hear back from the cost share programs, the Haygoods decided to take matters into their own hands. They took the money

have taken on the responsibilities of planting and maintaining food plots as well as building and putting up tree stands. The tree stands are not only used for hunting, but the kids also use them for tree houses.

Fishing is also a big deal for Tony and his son, who he said always catches more fish than anyone else. In fact, what was

once a small water hole is now being expanded for more fishing. Many of the community kids are often invited to the property for fun-filled events such as camping and fishing.

According to Tony, his favorite aspect of owning a TREASURE Forest is the recreation. However, he also stated that when maintaining a TREASURE Forest, your work is never done; you always want more. His future plans include a pavilion, nature and bike trails, and more community involvement.



*Tony Haygood inspecting his young longleaf pines.*

that they received from the harvest, site prepared it, and replanted it with loblolly pine. They also used the money to install a creek crossing. Things finally began to look up for the Haygoods.

## Family Ties

Family time and good stewardship are both important to the Haygoods. It is their intent to pass these values on to their children and extended family. The whole family is involved in the property management and as a result, family ties are stronger than ever. Although they don't lease the property for hunting, the Haygoods allow family and friends to hunt. Tony often has to compromise with his mom and his uncle to work out hunting schedules! These family members

## Diversity

Tony believes that diversity is what makes his property a TREASURE. Comprised of a mixture of 60% pines and 40% hardwoods, ponds, food plots, and a variety of wildlife, the Indian mounds and overall history of the place also lend to its diversity.

In February the Haygoods showcased their management practices to fellow forest landowners and potential tree farmers at the 110th Annual Farmers' Conference in Tuskegee, Alabama. Another tour of their TREASURE Forest was conducted by the Alabama Forestry Commission along with the Federation of Southern Cooperatives and Tuskegee University.

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Tour stops included pine and hardwood management, a southern pine beetle demonstration, and recreation opportunities.

Tony is an active member of the Macon County Forestry Planning Committee. He received his Tree Farm Certification in 1985 and became certified as a TREASURE Forest landowner

in 1999. He is also a member of the newly established Outreach Advisory Council for minority landowners created by State Forester Timothy C. Boyce.

Whether they go to there to camp, hunt, fish, walk in the hardwood bottoms, or just to relax, this TREASURE Forest remains what it has always been for Tony and his family. . . a simple retreat. ♣

## Preventing Timber Theft (Continued from page 15)

- Logs removed from the site that are not delivered promptly.

- Complaints or tips from landowners, neighbors, other loggers, foresters, consultants.

### •Use a written timber sale contract.

Entering a timber sale without a written contract to protect your interests is asking for trouble. A good timber sale contract that demonstrates good wood flow accountability measures and outlines termination date, prices, volumes, products, markets, sales area, cleanup, and penalties for contract violations will reduce temptation, thus eliminating most potential theft opportunities.

Harvesting and marketing timber products can be very complex. If you don't know the timber business, you better know the people with whom you are dealing. Most producers are hard working, honest business people. Treat the sale as a business deal; they will understand

and not be offended. Keeping the sale on a business level will act as a deterrent and aid in resolving any disputes. Good background checks and the bidding process are two key elements to protect the landowner.

An article in *Forest Landowner* magazine, written by Tom Kazee of Woodland Security, Inc., quotes three numbers that, based on my experience, all landowners should remember. The three important numbers are: 80-19-1.

*Eighty percent of us are honest and would not cheat another person even if given a golden opportunity. Nineteen percent are opportunistic and if an unhindered opportunity presents itself will succumb to temptation and take full advantage. Less than one percent are determined crooks that look for every opportunity to steal or cheat. Keeping the timber sale on a business level will deter most opportunities for theft.* ♣

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## Work Hard, Work Smart . . .

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parts enter your skin. Do not twist when tugging and avoid squeezing the tick's abdomen. Wash the site with soap and water. Save the tick in a sealed jar of alcohol for future reference.

### ANIMAL BITES or SCRATCHES

Immediately wash a wound or scratch caused by an animal with soap and water, and visit a physician as quickly as possible. If the bite is from a wild animal, try to capture the animal so it may be tested for rabies. The animal's brain must be intact to conduct rabies testing, so avoid injury to the animal's head and neck area.

**BE WEATHER SMART** Know the proper responses to weather emergencies.

•Tornadoes – A tornado may spring up quickly any time of year. Seek the lowest level by lying flat in the nearest ditch with your hands shielding your head.

•Lightning – Avoid a lightning strike by taking precautions before the storm reaches you. Most lightning strikes hit people from one to seven miles in front of clouds and rain. Remember, five seconds between the flash and the thunder means the storm is only one mile away. 1) Seek shelter in a low area under a thick growth of small trees, never under a single tree. In an open area, seek a low spot, such as a ravine or a ditch. 2) Stay away from tractors, wire fences or rails. 3) Drop to your knees and bend forward putting your hands on your knees. DO NOT place hands on the ground or lie flat on the ground - wet ground can carry electricity. 4) If you are in a group of people in an open area, spread out, keeping people several yards apart.

Experts in wilderness travel, camping and out door safety agree that "common sense" is always your best companion when you work outdoors, but it does not hurt to be prepared. You can work hard and be able to work another day if you will attend to the basic essentials. ♣

## Resources

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